

## ADAPTATION AS A DIMENSION OF TRANSLATION: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ‘THE LIGHT OF ASIA’ (ASIYA JOTHI)

**Gayathree Srikandavel**  
*gayachan57@gmail.com*

**ABSTRACT:** Adaptation is known as one of the dimensions in translation. Here the content is directed towards the culture of the target readership and adjustments are made according to the target culture. In fact, when a message is transferred from the source language to the target language, the translator also deals with two different cultures at the same time. As far as adaptation is concerned, the success could be achieved by the proper transference. The Great Renunciation ‘The Light of Asia’ has been adapted into Tamil by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai. KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai created ‘Asia Jothi’ as a spontaneous overflow in Tamil. It carries the content of Edwin Arnold’s ‘The Light of Asia’. This study aims at finding out the various forms of adaptation employed by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai in AsiyaJothi. The first Chapter named Book the First – theBuddha’s Birth is taken for the discussion in the present study. Finding out the strategies or techniques used by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai in substituting the ideas may be a loadstar to the budding translators. This paper identifies the techniques and strategiesemployed by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillaiand it may help the budding translators to meet the satisfaction of the target readership. Awareness in the various forms of adaptation enriches the performance of translation. In this respect adaptation is viewed as a dimensionof translation. Thus, the present study gets the significance for research. The primary sources of this study are Edwin Arnold’s ‘The light of Asia’ and KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai’s ‘Asia Jothi’.

**Key words:**Adaptation, Source Language and Target Language

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Translation as an emerging field, leads to the sustainable development in the information era. It unites people from various cultures, climes and societies. Translation is the mode to adapt the best from other climes and spread our cherished literary pieces throughout the world. When a translator finds it difficult to do a translation s/he can seek for alternate in order to meet the satisfaction of the target readership. These alternate ways are known as different dimensions of translation. Adaptation, transcreation and transliteration are identified as the major dimensions of translation.

Translation is not merely a word-for-word process instead it is a sense-to-sense process. The concept, idea and the substance of the original are preserved and carefully expressed in another language without offending the grammar and lexical tradition of that language. In fact, when a message is transferred from the source language (the language from which the message is transferred) to the target language (the language to which the message is transferred), the translator also deals with two different cultures at the same time.

Especially in the translation of literary pieces which is closely associated with cultural aspects, feelings and aspirations, adaptation or transcreation is applied in order to make the piece better. While doing literary translation, where the emphasis is on evoking emotional responses the translator can enjoy a certain degree of freedom. In fact slight deviations here and there are not condemned as inaccuracies instead commended as the translator's expression of individuality and originality.<sup>1</sup>

Transcreation is some sort of recreation of the original. Here the translator interpolates to capture the real intention of the original author and to express the essence of the original. Transcreation means 'translating' and 'recreating' the original in another language as per the context for which it is intended. Having felt the desired outcome thoroughly the translator can make significant changes wherever necessary in the process.

Some words are difficult to translate at times. Sometimes translators encounter some challenges to find the proper equivalents for some terms. In those circumstances the phonemic sound of the particular word is carefully observed and that phonemic sound is transcribed into the script form in the target language. It is known as transliteration.

Translation plays a major role in shaping literary systems and translation is always a rewriting of an original. Translation involves translating or transplanting into the receiving culture. In adaptation, the content or the substance of the original is directed towards the target culture and adjustments are made as per the general aspects of the target culture.

Of course when a concept is conveyed from the source language to the target language, the translator has to deal with two different cultures at the same time. Each society has its own cultural aspects such as tradition, norms, habits, values and the way of living. Literature as a mirror of the society reflects those aspects as they are. When one attempts to bring that literature into another language or to another clime some features suffer to some extent. It may be difficult to achieve accuracy and precision. Adaptation lends a hand in these circumstances to encounter the issues.

Adaptation means the transference of the original as per the culture of the target language. There are many forms of adaptation. Recontextualization, Tradaptation, Spin off, Reduction, Simplification, Condensation, Abridgement, Special version, Reworking, Offshoot, Transformation, Remediation and Re-vision are the various forms of adaptation.

This study identifies the various forms of adaptation employed by *KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai* when adapting Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* into Tamil as *AsiyaJothi*.

## **1.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

Adapting the best from other climes and spreading our own cherished throughout the world could be achieved through translation. Many works have been translated from time to time. This study aims at identifying the various forms of adaptation employed by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai in *AsiyaJothi*. Though Kavimani adapted the concept, idea and substance from Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* originality could be observed in *AsiyaJothi*. Cultural barriers are met profoundly. Kavimani doesn't fail to make the adjustments, which are allowed in adaptation whenever and wherever necessary. So identifying the techniques and strategies may help the budding translators to meet the satisfaction of the target readership. Awareness in the various forms of adaptation enriches the performance of translation. Thus, the present study gets the significance for research.

## **1.2 LIMITS OF THE STUDY**

There is a long tradition of translating literary and semi-literary works into Tamil language. Many literary pieces have been adapted into Tamil. KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai adapted Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* or *The Great Renunciation* into Tamil as *AsiyaJothi*. There are eight sectors in *The Light of Asia* or *The Great Renunciation* by Edwin Arnold. Only the first sector is taken into consideration for this study. The various forms of adaptation employed by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai when adapting the first Chapter named Book the First – the Buddha's Birth are identified and discussed in the present study.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In this study descriptive methodology is used to identify the different forms of adaptation employed by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai. Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* and the adaptation *AsiyaJothi* by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai are compared and analysed.

## **SOURCES**

Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* and KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai's *AsiyaJothi* are the primary sources of this study.

## **3. 'THE LIGHT OF ASIA' BY EDWIN ARNOLD AND 'ASIA JOTHI' BY KAVIMANI THESIKAVINAYAKAMPILLAI**

The Great Renunciation 'The Light of Asia' has been adapted into Tamil by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai. KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai created *AsiyaJothi* as a spontaneous overflow in Tamil. It carries the very content of Edwin Arnold's 'The Light of Asia'. Kavimani is very much impressed by Buddha's life and his art of living. That's why KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai selected *Light of Asia* to adapt it into Tamil.<sup>2</sup>

People from orient culture to occident culture are overwhelmed by the teachings of Lord Buddha. A host of information and inscriptions about Lord Buddha and His teachings could be observed even from our antique Tamil works. But *AsiyaJothi* seems as a work about Lord Buddha. *AsiyaJothi* has been considered as a complete whole.<sup>3</sup>

Some features of adaptation are looked through some extracts from *The Light of Asia* and its adaptation *AsiyaJothi* here.

In adaptation, the translator changes the content and form of the source text in a way that conforms to the rules of the target language and culture. In general, this procedure is used to deal with culturally-bound words or expressions, metaphors and images in translation.

... The dream is good!  
The crab is in conjunction with the sun;  
The Queen shall bear a boy, a holy child  
Of wondrous wisdom, profiting all flesh,  
Who shall deliver men from ignorance,  
Or rule the world, if he will deign to rule.

புரரசிகண்டகனாநற்கனாவாம்  
பானுவுமேகற்கடகமனையில் நின்றான்  
சீரமையும் ஆண்மகனைப் பெறுவாள் அந்தச்  
செல்வமகன் தெய்வீகமகனேயாவான்  
ஒருமுயற் றானகுருவாகிஎங்கும்  
உண்மையுபதேசங்கள் செய்வான் வேண்டின்  
வாரிதி சூழ் புவிமுழுதும் ஆள்வான் அன்னோன்  
மகிமையெல்லாமட எடுத்துரைப்பதுஎளிதோ ஜயா

Monia Bayar (2007) argues that adaptation is based on three main procedures:

Cultural substitution, Paraphrase and Omission.

In cultural substitution the translator uses equivalent words that are ready-made in the target language. This gives the same intention as that of the original. In other words, the translator substitutes cultural words of the original with the cultural words in the target language.

An example of cultural substitution is used in the translation of the expressions below:

*“For which gifts looking with this wondrous boy,  
The King gave order that his town should keep  
High festival ...”*

“இவ்வரியபேறெல்லாம் எய்தற்கான  
இம்மகனைப் பெற்றமகிழ் கொண்டுமன்னன்,  
“திவ்வியமாநகரெங்கும் சிறப்புச் செய்து  
திருவிழாக் கொண்டாடவேண்டும்” என்றான்”

The translator in the above example substitutes the original with expressions which are culturally specific in the target language.

Yet, if the translator cannot find a cultural expression to substitute the source language expression, he may resort to paraphrase.

*“... Therefore the ways were swept,  
Rose-odours sprinkled in the street, the trees  
Were hung with lamps and flags, ...”*

“மாநகர் வீதிவிளக்கிநின்றார் - குலை  
வாழைகள் வாசலில் கட்டிநின்றார்  
வானுயர் தோரணம் கட்டிநின்றார் - எங்கும்  
வாசமெழுபன்னீர் வீசிநின்றார்.

கோலமிட்டார் கொடிதூக்கிவிட்டார் - உயர்  
கோபுரம் எங்குமேதீபமிட்டார்  
காலைகடைகோயில் வீதியெல்லாம் - மலர்த்  
தாமரங்களால் பந்தல் செய்துவைத்தார்”

In *AsiyaJothi* Kavimani exaggerates the description of the decorative town. He doesn't fail to give a vivid picturesque description in front of his readers along with the original concept.

*“Queen Maya stood at noon, her days fulfilled,  
Under a Palsa in the Palace-grounds,  
A stately trunk, straight as a temple-shaft  
With crown of glossy leaves and fragrant blooms;”*

“ஒருநாள் பகலில் உச்சியம் பொழுதில்  
அரண்மனைஅருகில் அணிமலர் மலர்ந்து  
நறுமணம் வீசுமோர் நந்தவனத்தில்  
தளையும்பூவும் தலையில் தாங்கிக்  
கோயிலில் நட்டகொடிமரம் போல  
வளரும் ஓர் அசோகமரத்தின் நிழலில்

மாயாதேவிவந்துநின்றனள்”

The procedure of paraphrase is used to surpass all cultural barriers that the original presents. It is based on explanations, additions and changes in word order.

Actually, paraphrase is not only used in culturally-bound texts, but also in poor written and anonymous texts which include omissions. One of the drawbacks of paraphrase is infidelity to the original. The translator should not overuse this procedure unless necessary, otherwise his translation will be judged as different from the original.

... *The dream is good!*

Omission means the deletion of a word or words from the source language text while translating. This procedure is used to deal with the cultural disparity existing between the source language and the target language. In fact, translation by omission is very common in subtitling.

The scene of teaching Gayathree Mantra is avoided.

... *speaking slow the verse ‘Gayathree’ named, which only High-born hear:*

*‘Om, tatsaviturvarenyam  
Bhargodevasyadhimahi  
Dhiyo yon a prachodayat’*

*‘Acarya, I write’ meekly replied  
The prince ...*

Translators usually omit vulgar words that do not have equivalents in the target language, or that may not be accepted by the target receptors.

Some names of the Rishis are not produced as the original

*... Khamba, viskhamba, abab, attata,  
To kumuds, gundhikas, and utpalas,  
By pundarikas unto padumas...*

Besides there are some forms of adaptation. They could be found in *AsiyaJothi*.

Re-contextualisation is a process that extracts text, signs or meaning from the original context in order to introduce it into another context. Since the meaning of texts and signs depend on their context, re-contextualisation implies a change of meaning, and often of the communicative purpose too.

For example the following expression can be quoted:

*Splendid, six-rayed, in colour rosy-pearl*

ஆறு கதிரொளிசெய்திருமீன் கண்ணுக்கு

Modulation is a change in point of view that allows us to express the same phenomenon in a different way.

Some names are modified as per the usage in the target language here. It is some sort of creative translation.

*King Suddhodhana :சுத்தோதனப்பர்*

*Kamadhuk :காமதேனு*

This semantic-pragmatic procedure that changes the category of thought, the focus, the point of view and the whole conceptualization is distinguished.

The validity of simplification was confirmed by comparison made between Source Text and Target Text. Simplification brings many consequences. It can make the target reader understand the text more easily.

For instance, the following phrases can be viewed:

*For birth and death*

இப்பிறப்பையல்லாதுபிறப்புவேறிங்கு

*Token was an elephant*

மன்னும் மதவேழம்

At sentence level, the most common transformations every translator makes are omission, addition, transposition, change of grammatical forms, loss of compensation, concretization, generalization and meaning extension. These transformations are caused by differences in the grammar and vocabulary of the source language and target language.

*Awaked, Bliss beyond mortal mother's*

ஒருதாயங்கண்டறியா இன்பங்கண்டாள்

In grammar transformation one envisages a change of the grammatical characteristics of a word, word combination or a sentence in a translation.

*Token was an elephant*

மன்னும் மதவேழம்

Expansion refers to the case where the translator exceeds the number of words of the source language text in translation.

*End hence for me and those who learn my law*

எனக்குமிலைஎன்னைவழிபட்டுவாழும்  
எவர்க்குமில்லை

ஒப்பரியஅடியவர்கள்

In short, adaptation is an important procedure of translation. It enhances the readability of the target text. The adapted text eases the receptor's understanding of the original ideas, images, metaphors and culture through the target language and culture. Thus, cultural substitution, paraphrase and omission offer various possibilities for translators to deal with culturally-bound texts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Great Renunciation 'The Light of Asia' has been adapted into Tamil by KavimaniThesikavinayakampillai. *AsiyaJothi* has all the ease of the original. The Light of Asia is a creation with spiritual implication. In the translation of such creations the translator should understand the implied meaning while reading in between lines, the real intention of the original creator ought to be aptly carried out. It is the bounden duty of the translator to weigh each and every aspect carefully and render it with accuracy.

As slight adjustments such as addition, omission, alteration, deviation, deletion and interpolation are permitted to some extent in adaptation. Kavimani dexterously applied the various forms of adaptation whenever and wherever needed. These scholarly applications may be a loadstar to the budding translators. Thus, adaptation is identified as the effective dimension with powerful forms in order to encounter the cultural barriers and to meet the satisfaction of the readership especially in the translation of the pieces like *The Light of Asia* as they carry the spiritual values and profound aspirations. Thus sustainable development in the information era could be achieved through these kinds of efforts like adapting the best from other climes. An awareness of this may be helpful for the budding translators.

#### 5. REFERENCES

1. Aher, E. (1968). *Proceedings of the Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies*. Madras: International Association of Tamil Research.
2. Nida, E.A, (1964), *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: E.J.Brill
3. Eeswaran, S, (2005), *nkhopngau;g;gpay*, Paavai Printers, Chennai, p 49
4. Arnold, E, (1941), *The Light of Asia*. Ceylon: Buddha Sahitya Sabha. p ii
5. Thesikavinayakampillai, s. (1965), *Mrpa N[hjp*. Chennai: Paari Nilayam. p 8